



American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



RHODE ISLAND
Breastfeeding
COALITION

Rhode Island Chapter

September 29, 2007

Dear Colleague:

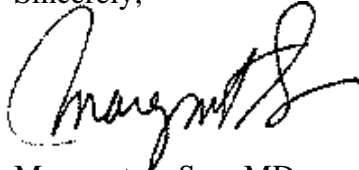
The Rhode Island Academy of Family Physicians; the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP); the Rhode Island Chapter of the American College of Nurse Midwives; the Rhode Island Department of Health; the Rhode Island Medical Society; the Physicians' Committee for Breastfeeding in Rhode Island; and the Rhode Island Breastfeeding Coalition, are writing to urge you to eliminate the marketing of infant formula in your hospitals and offices. Many major medical organizations, including the AAP and ACOG, recommend that babies get no other food or drink besides breastmilk for the first six months of life. Substantial research shows this recommendation is undermined when hospitals distribute formula company discharge bags to new mothers.

Multiple studies show that when nursing mothers take home a commercial discharge bag, they are more likely to start using formula – even if the formula has been removed from the bag (Cochrane Data Base Systematic Review, 2000; 2:CD002075). For this reason, the AAP and ACOG now have position statements discouraging gift packs with formula. Recent evidence summarized in the CDC Guide to Breastfeeding Interventions states that **“The commercial marketing of infant feeding products has been shown to have a negative impact on breastfeeding.”** Other organizations that discourage or oppose the distribution of maternity bags include the American Public Health Association, the World Health Organization, and the Government Accountability Office.


We encourage you to join the three Rhode Island hospitals that have eliminated this marketing practice: South County Hospital, Newport Hospital, and Westerly Hospital. You have the opportunity to give out bags that market your own hospital instead of marketing an expensive formula product. The commercial bags are often overstocked, taking up valuable storage space, and require nursing time for stocking and handling. When the kits get recalled for defective formula, as happened in September of 2006, this adds to the hospital's liability, and compels staff to track which patients received which lot numbers and then contact those patients.

New mothers deserve our support. We believe that hospitals should market health, and nothing else. We would be pleased to work with you on helping to eliminate this practice. You may contact Erin Dugan, MPH, CLC, State Breastfeeding Coordinator at the RI Department of Health at (401) 222-1380 or Erin.Dugan@health.ri.gov.

Sincerely,



Margaret A. Sun, MD
President, Rhode Island Academy of Family Physicians



Andrew Snyder, MD FAAP
President, Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics



Kate Norman Frometa, CNM
Vice-Chair, Rhode Island Chapter of the American College of Nurse Midwives



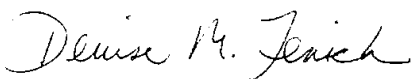
David R. Gifford, MD, MPH
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